



RESEARCH
& INNOVATION
FOUNDATION

**Research and Innovation
Foundation (RIF)
Cyprus**



**Ministry of Innovation,
Science & Technology**

**Ministry of Innovation, Science
And Technology (MOST)
Israel**

**First Cyprus-Israel Scientific Research Program
CALL FOR JOINT PROJECT PROPOSALS
For the Years 2024-2026
Deadline for Submissions: 11 April 2024**

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**First Cyprus-Israel Scientific Research Program
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Within the framework of the Cyprus-Israel agreement on scientific cooperation, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy (DMRID) of the Republic of Cyprus, through the Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF), and the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology of the State of Israel (MOST), have decided to provide financial support and are glad to invite researchers and scientists to submit joint proposals for research projects carried out jointly by researchers from both countries.

The aim of this program is to support the development of scientific and technological cooperation between Cypriot and Israeli researchers and to strengthen the scientific partnership between research groups from both countries, by establishing bilateral research networks, enhancing research cooperation and promoting the exchange of knowledge between Cypriot and Israeli scientists.

The joint research shall focus on one of the main areas of cooperation and its subtopics as detailed in Section A, and concentrate on applied research which could lead to technological applicability and the development of new products (Technology Readiness Level [TRL] 2-4).

Qualifying scientific applicants in this framework may receive research grants from RIF and MOST, respectively, according to the applicable national funding procedures, regulations, and the requirements as detailed in this Call.

A. MAIN AREAS OF COOPERATION

Cypriot-Israeli research teams are hereby invited to submit joint proposals for applied research projects in any of the following areas:

1. Environment

- i. Protection of the marine environment and biodiversity
- ii. Decarbonisation of ship operation

2. Renewable energy

- i. Renewable energy production technologies
- ii. Digital management and monitoring systems for the production and distribution of energy
- iii. Energy efficiency in urban environments

3. Health

- i. Translational Research on molecular and medical genetics for treatment of diseases.

B. MODE OF COOPERATION

Cooperation will take the form of planning and performing joint research as well as conducting mutual visits between laboratories for the purpose of facilitating the research. Each joint research team may submit only one project within this program.

Cooperation may also take the form of:

- a) Joint research activities in which interdependent subprojects of a single project are conducted by Cypriot and Israeli teams;
- b) Complementary methodological approaches to a common problem;
- c) Joint use of research facilities, materials, equipment and/or services by cooperating scientists;
- d) Mutual visits between laboratories for the purpose of facilitating the research.

C. LEVEL OF FUNDING AND DURATION OF PROJECTS

It is the intention of the Parties to fund research proposals selected hereunder for a term of **three (3) years** and contracts will be signed accordingly. Where necessary, it is possible to submit a request for project duration extension. **Please note, as a rule, the extension duration will not exceed 3 months.**

The Parties intend to support **up to nine (9) joint projects**. The final number of projects to be funded will be determined based on such factors as merits of the proposals upon scientific evaluation, and budgetary considerations.

The total maximum funding for all research projects approved under this Call is 3,600,000 ILS for the Israeli side (equivalent to 900,000 Euros), for a three-year period. On the Cypriot side, the total maximum funding for all research projects approved under this Call is 900,000 Euros, for a three-year period.

The maximum funding for each single project will be up to 400,000 ILS for the Israeli side (equivalent to 100,000 Euros), for a three-year period. On the Cypriot side, the maximum funding for each single project will be up to 100,000 Euros, for a three-year period.

In accordance, research projects should be planned on a three-year basis beginning third trimester of 2024. Contracts will be signed accordingly in each country.

Funding for the approved projects depends on the availability of funds and the approval of the State budget in each country.

D. ELIGIBILITY

Proposals must meet the following preconditions:

1. Projects must be conducted by collaborating Cypriot and Israeli scientific research teams.
2. Proposals must be for research projects in one of the main areas of cooperation and its subtopics as detailed in Section A.
3. Each joint research team must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) from each country (**Note: Referred to as Project Coordinator (PC) in Cyprus RIF documents**).

4. Each person, acting as PI / PC, can submit only one (1) proposal in this Call for Proposals.
5. The PI / PC on each side must be affiliated with an academic institution or a research institute ("Affiliated Institution"). An Affiliated Institution is determined in each country as follows:

In Israel:

- a) An accredited Institution of Higher Education, according to the Council for Higher Education Law, 5718-1958; or
- b) A Research Institute which is a nonprofit organization, a government company or a governmental unit.

For the purposes of this Call, a "Research Institute" in Israel is a research institute whose main activity is the advancement of cutting-edge scientific knowledge, which possesses appropriate infrastructure and equipment, which employs researchers who, inter alia, publish articles related to their research in leading scientific journals, and who present their research at international symposia.

In Cyprus:

The Host Organisation (HO) must be a Research Organisation (A1, A2) or Other Organisation (C1 – for **Private Universities ONLY**), as defined in the RIF's:

- i. Relevant Call for Proposals, and
- ii. Work Programme for the "RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation" – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

Special eligibility provisions for Israeli Researchers:

1. In compliance with MOST's Procedures Regarding Scientific Projects Funded by MOST ("[MOST Regulations](#)"), an Israeli PI that has or will have an active grant from any of MOST's international cooperation programs, whose funding will be concurrent to the funding of this program, is not eligible to apply. No parallel funding is allowed in the international cooperation program. A researcher who is not eligible to submit a proposal as PI due to an active grant may submit one additional proposal in the international cooperation program as Associated PI, if he does not have an active grant in the international program in which he acts as Associated PI.
2. **Exception for this call** – an Israeli researcher having submitted a proposal for any binational MOST call during the current calendar year, 2024, **may** submit a proposal to this call. Additionally, submission to this Call will not limit researchers from submitting another proposal to a different MOST international cooperation Call for proposals in 2024.

Special eligibility provisions for Cypriot teams:

General eligibility rules apply, as defined in the RIF's:

- i. Relevant Call for Proposals, and
- ii. Work Programme for the "RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation" – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

E. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Joint project proposals must be prepared and carried out jointly by the Israeli and the Cypriot project partners and should be submitted simultaneously by both the Cypriot and Israeli PIs / PCs, to RIF in Cyprus and to MOST in Israel. Each joint proposal should be written in English and be submitted using the designated proposal template in each country (see guidelines below).

Joint deadline for applications: 11 April 2024 at 13:00 in Cyprus (15:00 in Israel).
Please note that in Israel proposals should be submitted to the research authorities one week in advance. Proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances after the said date and hour.

Further submission instructions for Israeli research teams:

- a) **Please take special note of the deadline times, because they are different from the norm.**
- b) The Israeli PI shall submit the proposal through the Science Forefront system, at <https://kf.most.gov.il>.
In order to apply for the first time, the applicant needs to fill an "account request" at the Science Forefront system. The request should be approved by the Research Authority of the Affiliated Institution. Once approved, the applicant will be notified by email that the account is active. **The approval process may take time and therefore should be done well in advance of the application deadline.**
- c) **Deadline for researchers' submission:** The PI must pre-submit the proposal in English via the Science Forefront system by **4 April 2024 at 15:00 local time (Israel). The online system will be closed for submissions after the said date and hour and no researchers' submissions will be accepted after that time. Israeli researchers who have not submitted their proposals by 4 April 2024 at 15:00 local time (Israel) will not be allowed to submit their proposal.**
- d) A proposal that has been submitted can be edited by the PI, in coordination with the Affiliated Institution, until the final joint submission deadline.
- e) The Affiliated Institution must submit the proposal not later than by the final deadline on, **11 April 2024 at 15:00 local time (Israel time)**. Proposals that are not submitted by the Affiliated Institution through the Science Forefront system by this time, **will not be accepted.**
- f) Please be advised that as technical problems are possible, and the submission process may take a significant amount of time.
Therefore, it is strongly recommended to fulfil the above steps well in advance of the applications deadlines.

Further submission instructions for Cypriot research teams:

- a) The Coordinator of the Cypriot Project Consortium should submit a Proposal on the RIF's IRIS Portal (<https://iris.research.org.cy>), by the set deadline (11 April 2024, 13:00) following the detailed instructions included in the national Call for Proposals.

- b) The Project Coordinator and all the organisations participating in the Cypriot Project Consortium, should register in advance on the IRIS Portal.
- c) Potential applicants are advised to read the «Guide for Applicants», which contains guidelines and clarifications regarding the Submission procedure and the «IRIS Portal User Manual» which can be found on the IRIS Portal (<https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary>).
- d) The RIF strongly recommends to Cypriot entities to submit a first draft of their proposal one week before the submission deadline.

For both countries:

A valid project application consists of the appropriate application form **and is formally filed** together with all the necessary application documents required from each side of a joint research team as detailed above, submitted respectively to RIF in Cyprus and to MOST in Israel. **If the applications are not duly received both in Cyprus and in Israel by the date and hour indicated above and in accordance with the submission instructions, the proposal will be deemed ineligible and will not be forwarded for evaluation and will be rejected in both countries.**

F. FUNDED EXPENSES

Funding provided by this Call is intended to enhance joint collaboration between Cypriot and Israeli researchers. Therefore, funding may be assigned to costs related to support of the collaboration vectors, such as costs related to the bilateral nature of the project (travel expenses of the researchers, scientific meetings, etc.) as well as to defray costs incurred by the approved research projects (disposables, publication costs, etc.).

In any case, each budget item or expenditure for which reimbursement is requested must conform to the respective national rules of each applicant.

Participating researchers are encouraged to plan visits to their counterparts' institutions and labs, given that such visits are an integral part of the research collaboration. International travel costs and in-country living expenses of visiting scientists, including accommodation, per diem and any other relevant expenses for each visiting scientist, should be included in their project's budget. In this regard when preparing the budget for each team, please note that each side funds their own travel expenses and should budget accordingly. Funding provided under this Call may only be used for visits taking place in Cyprus or Israel; visits to third countries are not eligible for financing by project funds.

Further funding provisions for the Israeli side:

Please see full funding provisions on MOST [Procedures Regarding Scientific Projects](#) Funded by MOST ("[MOST Regulations](#)"). All activities and funding pursuant to this Call must be in accordance with MOST Regulations unless otherwise specified.

Further funding provisions for the Cypriot side:

- a) Please see full funding provisions in the RIF's:
 - i. Relevant Call for Proposals, and

- ii. Work Programme for the “RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation” – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.
- b) Participation of Foreign Research Organisations (FRO) (from countries other than Israel) is not allowed.
- c) Eligible costs for Cypriot researchers travelling to Israel include economy class air tickets and a daily allowance covering subsistence costs (for further details please see relevant section of the abovementioned “RESTART 2016-2020” Work Programme).

G. RENEWAL OF FUNDING

In Israel, renewal of project funding for a subsequent year is subject to the submission of the relevant documents and reports, two months before the end of the previous year's contract.

In Cyprus, renewal of funding does not apply. Beneficiaries should consult the Work Programme for the “RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation” – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023, for funding regulations.

H. INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING JOINT PROPOSALS

Each joint proposal should be written in English and the content must be identical in both countries.

1. The joint proposal should include the following sections:
 - a) General Objectives of the Project and Compatibility with the Objectives of the Programme and the Call
 - b) Specific Scientific and Technological Objectives of the Project
 - c) Technology Readiness Level of Project Activities
 - d) Existing Knowledge / State-of-the-Art
 - e) Project Innovation and Originality
 - f) Impact
 - g) IPR Management, Dissemination and Exploitation of Results
 - h) Analysis and Description of Methodology
 - i) Time Frame
 - j) Consortium Description
 - k) Roles and Activities of Participating Organisations
2. **In Israel only**
 - a. The proposal form should be up to 12 pages, including figures and tables, not including bibliography. Font: Times New Roman 11; line spacing: 1.5
 - b. **Bibliography**: A complete bibliographic list should be attached to the proposed research. The five most relevant items for the proposed research should be marked with an asterisk.

- c. **CV:** A short CV for each researcher involved in the research of up to 5 pages each, including: personal statement (brief description of why the investigator is well-suited for the role on the proposed project); list of ongoing and completed research projects from the last three years that the investigator wishes to highlight; citation of up to five publications or research products that highlight the investigator's experience and qualifications for the proposed project; positions, scientific appointments, and honors.

Additional data for the Science Forefront system:

- a) **Short abstract** (up to 1500 characters in Hebrew and English).
b) **Applicability** up to 1000 characters in Hebrew.
c) **Importance of the research** up to 500 characters in Hebrew/English
d) **Budget request** - enter the requested budget in NIS.
The budget of the researcher from abroad must be entered in a general way in the section designated for this purpose.
e) **Letter of intent** from the research PIs in both countries affirming their intent to collaborate on the proposed research.
f) **Additional authorizations needed depending on the type of research** (e.g. Helsinki Committee, animal experiments) shall be submitted along with the proposal. In case the required authorization is still not available at the time of submission, a statement in free text should be attached including the researcher's commitment that if their proposal is approved, the required authorization will be submitted as soon as possible.
g) Please specify 5 researchers from Israel with expertise in the field of the proposal, who could serve as potential external reviewers.

Do not add additional documents beyond what is specified above and in the attached guidelines for submission to the Science Forefront system.

3. In Cyprus only

Coordinators from Cyprus should submit their proposal on IRIS using the RIF Part B template as described in the relevant National Call for Proposals. The template, in addition to the sections mentioned above, also includes the following sections.

- a) Work Packages
b) Work Packages Table
c) Deliverables Table
d) Research Team Gender Table
e) Project Budget Description
f) Ethical and Environmental Issues

The proposal form should be up to 20 pages for the Cypriot applicants, including figures and tables, not including bibliography.

For more submission issues please consult the RIF's:

- ii. Relevant Call for Proposals, and
iii. Work Programme for the "RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation" – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

I. PROPOSALS REVIEW

For the evaluation of Proposals to be submitted under this specific Call for Proposals, each country follows an independent and separate procedure.

The following evaluation criteria will be used by both RIF and MOST in their respective evaluation procedures:

1. Excellence (40%) – The scientific and technological excellence, and the extent to which the proposed method of conducting the research is qualitative, feasible and consistent with the proposed objectives. The degree of innovation and originality of the proposed research in comparison to the state of the art.
2. Added Value and Benefit (30%) – The research contribution to the development of new applied scientific and technological advancement in the field.
3. Implementation (30%) – Based on the experience, previous achievement and skills of the researchers and level of collaboration and compatible skills of partners.

Evaluation procedure to be followed in Cyprus:

- a) A Proposal Eligibility Check and a remote scientific evaluation procedure by one (1) independent evaluator per proposal, as described in the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Program, will be performed by the RIF.
- b) The full analysis of the evaluation criteria is provided in the RIF's national Call for Proposals.
- c) Only above-threshold proposals will be considered for selection by the Joint Cyprus – Israel Committee
- d) For details on the evaluation procedure and evaluation criteria analysis please consult the RIF's:
 - i. Relevant Call for Proposals, and
 - ii. Work Programme for the “RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation” – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

Afterwards, RIF and MOST will establish a Joint Cyprus-Israeli Scientific Committee, which will decide which proposals will be selected for funding based on the results of the scientific evaluation performed by each organization.

Only recommended projects that the representatives of both Parties agree on will be considered for funding.

Proposal Evaluation and Selection Process:

1. After the deadline for submission of proposals, the two cooperating national funding agencies exchange tables containing the proposals submitted to each country for preliminary check purposes to check compliance with all the eligibility

- requirements. Only proposals passing the preliminary check procedure by both national agencies are forwarded for scientific evaluation.
2. The national agencies carry out separate evaluation procedures, in accordance with each country's national regulations and the joint evaluation criteria published in the Call for Proposals. Only proposals submitted in both countries will be evaluated.
 3. Each national funding agency draws up its own proposals ranking list according to the scores received by each proposal during the evaluation.
 4. The national agencies exchange their proposals ranking lists before the meeting of the Joint Committee of the 2 countries.
 5. Only proposals deemed eligible under national regulations in both countries will be forwarded to the Joint Committee for final selection (*this refers to proposals with an evaluation score of at least 80/100 or 12.00/15.00 for RIF evaluations*).
 6. At the Joint Committee meeting, representatives of the cooperating national funding agencies will:
 - i. establish a joint proposal ranking list in accordance with the average score obtained by the separate evaluations of the proposals (*only the eligible ones*) in the two countries,
 - ii. select the proposals to be funded¹ according to:
 - the joint proposals ranking list, and
 - the available budget, and
 - iii. summarise the rationale behind the selection of the Joint Committee.
 7. In case of proposals with equal score, if there is no available budget to fund all of them, the selection of the Joint Committee will be taken according to the following tie criteria:
 - i. In order of the average score received in the "Excellence" criterion.
 - ii. If proposals are still tied, in order of the average score received in the "Added Value and Benefit" criterion.
 8. The national agencies will:
 - i. announce the preliminary results (Joint Committee selection and joint proposals ranking list without score but with a funding decision), and

¹Note for Israeli (MOST) applicants - On the Israeli side the Joint Committee's selection recommendation is then confirmed by the Ministry's funding committee.

- ii. send to the MOST Principal Investigators (PIs) / RIF Project Coordinators (PCs)² an email with an attached letter announcing the result, without the Evaluation Report.
9. PIs / PCs will have the right to submit a request for redress to their respective funding agency, regarding the procedure followed, within 10 calendar days³.
10. A Joint Redress Committee will be set up to examine only those requests for redress that have been submitted to both national funding agencies.
11. In case a breach of the evaluation process is substantiated, the two cooperating national funding agencies will take the necessary corrective actions, subject to budgetary restrictions.
12. The outcome of the Joint Redress Committee decision shall be communicated to the PIs / PCs by the national funding agencies, with the obligation to disseminate it to the rest of the partners of the proposal(s).
13. The final results will be announced.

J. CONTRACTS, PAYMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Contracts:

Upon approval of a particular project proposal, separate contracts will be signed in Cyprus and Israel, between RIF and the Affiliated Institution of the Cypriot PC and between MOST and the Affiliated Institution of the Israeli PI.

2. Payments:

Payments will be made by RIF and MOST to the Affiliated Institution of each PI / PC, respectively, in keeping with the provisions of the contracts referred to above, according to the regulations and practices in force in each country.

3. Final reports:

Within three months of the conclusion of the project, Israeli PIs must submit a final report in English to MOST at Reports@most.gov.il or through the Science Forefront system. It should include a final scientific and financial report covering the work and cooperation carried out during the entire three-year project period, in accordance with the contract's requirements.

Cypriot PCs must submit a final report according to the procedure described in the RIF's Work Programme for the "RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation" – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

² Note for Cypriot (RIF) applicants - Relevant information will also be sent to the Legal Representatives (LRs)

³ Note for Cypriot (RIF) applicants - Redress requests will be submitted by email (not through the IRIS platform)

Each PI / PC and each Affiliated Institution is accountable to MOST or RIF, respectively, for the execution of the project.

K. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

For both sides:

It is strongly recommended that the Cypriot and Israeli research teams and their Institutions enter into an agreement regarding Intellectual Property rights from the output of the financed project prior to the commencement of the collaborative activities.

For Israeli Applicants:

All procedures and activities under this Call or the projects approved hereinafter, including the eligibility of Affiliated Institutions via which applications must be filed and the eligibility of PI's and Associated-PI's, are subject to MOST Regulations and to MOST Standard Contract for Scientific Projects ("[Standard Terms](#)").

Applicants are required to familiarize themselves with the Standard Terms before filing an application under this Call. Filing an application constitutes a declaration that the applicant has done so and agrees to be bound by the Standard Terms' provisions thereof. Please note any updates made to the standard terms made before the final submission date will apply to proposals submitted to this Call.

For Cypriot applicants:

Before submitting a proposal please consult the RIF's:

- i. Relevant Call for Proposals, and
- ii. Work Programme for the "RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation" – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

A signed Consortium Agreement will be required to be submitted to RIF before the contract approval, according to the procedure described in the RIF's Work Programme for the "RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation" – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2023.

L. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information can be obtained as follows:

ISRAEL:

On administrative matters:

Israeli researchers should consult administrative matters directly with the Research Authority at their Affiliated Institution. The Institution will contact the Ministry in case of necessity.

On scientific matters:

1. Environment

Dr. Moshe Ben Sasson

Director, Agriculture, Environment, and Water Technologies
Ministry of Innovation, Science & Technology

Tel: 02-5411134
MosheBS@most.gov.il

2. Renewable energy

Dr. Avi Raveh

Director of Chemistry, Materials, Nanotechnology and Energy
Ministry of Innovation, Science & Technology
Tel: 02-5411136
AviR@most.gov.il

3. Health

Dr. Sharon Yagur-Kroll

Director for Biomedical Research
Ministry of Innovation, Science & Technology
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SharonYK@most.gov.il

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IRIS website: <https://iris.research.org.cy/#!/>